

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The present Amendment amends claims 1, 12, 14, and 16, and adds new claims 18 through 21. Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1-21 will be pending, of which claims 1, 12, 14 and 16 are in independent form. Applicant submits that additional claims fees of \$50 are necessary for entry of this Amendment. The undersigned hereby authorizes payment of this \$50 fee and any additional fees necessary to enter this amendment to be charged to our deposit account, Deposit Account No. 061910.

In the Office Action, Examiner rejects claims 1-17 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JA 3-213,483 (JA '483) in view of Nagashima (U.S. Patent No. 4,753,448). Examiner asserts the JA '483 reference shows a motorcycle with a frame having a head tube 2, a steering fork 13, and lower and upper triple clamps 14, 15 fastened to the head tube. Additionally, with respect to JA '483, Examiner states that handlebar clamps include riser tubes 17, 19, 22 each having a lower surface operatively coupled to the upper triple clamp 14 and an upper surface (top of 19) coupled to a riser cap 20, and a handlebar 18 is held in first and second recesses formed in the risers and caps. Further, with respect to JA '483, Examiner suggests that fasteners 21 couple the riser tubes and riser caps, where each fastener 21 is a threaded bolt that extends through the cap into a boss in the corresponding rider tube and where the fasteners are shown to be accessible from the top rather than the bottom of the handlebar clamp. Examiner asserts the Nagashima reference shows a handlebar clamp including a number of fasteners (threaded bolts 15) that extends through an aperture in a lower clamp element 2A into a threaded boss in an upper clamp element (cap 2B) to hold a handlebar 1 there between, where the fasteners are only accessible and visible from below.

Examiner states that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide the JA '684 handlebar clamp (here, applicants assume Examiner meant to reference JA '483) with the bolts extending from below, as taught by Nagashima, in order to improve the appearance of the handlebar assembly. Further, with respect to the method of claims 14 and 15, Examiner suggests that it would have been obvious to replace the top access handlebar clamp with a second, bottom access clamp, in view of Nagashima, in order to provide a smoother, more attractive appearing handlebar clamping assembly. Regarding claim 16, Examiner further asserts that the heads of bolts 5 do not extend below the lower surface of the lower clamp element, and

therefore, a skilled artisan would recognize that the bolt head is recessed within the lower clamp, probably being aligned with the underside of the rider tube.

Similarly, in the Office Action, Examiner rejects claims 1-17 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JA 3-213,483 (JA '483) in view of Borromeo (U.S. Patent No. 4,794,815). Again, Examiner describes the JA '483 reference as above. With respect to Borromeo, Examiner states a handlebar clamp including a fastener (threaded bolt 20) is shown that extends through an aperture in a lower clamp element 9 into a threaded boss in an upper clamp element 8 to hold a handlebar M there between. The fasteners are only accessible and visible from below and the lower end of the bolt fastener is recessed into the lower clamp element and its visible outer end is aligned with the lowermost portion of the lower clamp element. Examiner concludes that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide the JA '684 handlebar clamp (here, applicants assume Examiner meant to reference JA '483) with the bolts extending from below, as taught by Nagashima (here, applicants assume Examiner meant Borromeo), in order to improve the appearance of the handlebar assembly. Further, with respect to the method of claims 14 and 15, Examiner suggests that it would have been obvious to replace the top access handlebar clamp with a second, bottom access clamp, in view of Nagashima (again, applicants assume Examiner meant Borromeo), in order to provide a smoother, more attractive appearing handlebar clamping assembly.

In light of the amendments above and the remarks that follow, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration. In particular, Applicant submits that neither a combination of JA '483 and Nagashima nor a combination of JA '483 and Borromeo, as suggested by the Examiner, would result in the claimed invention of claims 1-21.

Applicants, as mentioned above, have amended claims 1, 12, 14, and 16. Claim 1, as now amended, includes "each riser tube including a base end and an extension end, each base end extending in a first direction, the first direction being at an angle from vertical, the extension end extending in a second direction outward from the base end of each riser tube". Applicants submit that there is no teaching within the JA '483 reference to have the riser tubes 22 extend in first and second directions. Further, applicants contend neither the lower clamp element 2A of Nagashima nor the support leg 2 of Borromeo are taught to extend in a first direction at an angle from vertical. As such, applicants believe that claim 1, as amended, is patentable both over JA '483 used in combination with either Nagashima or Borromeo. In addition, claims 2-11 and 18-

21 are dependent from claim 1, and as such, are believed by applicants to also be patentable over JA '483 used in combination with either Nagashima or Borromeo.

Similarly, claim 12, as now amended, includes "each riser tube including a base end and an extension end, each base end extending in a first direction, the first direction being at an angle from vertical, the extension end extending in a second direction outward from the base end of each riser tube". Applicants again submit that there is no teaching within the JA '483 reference to have the riser tubes 22 extend in first and second distinct directions. Further, applicants contend neither the lower clamp element 2A of Nagashima nor the support leg 2 of Borromeo are taught to extend in a first direction at an angle from vertical. As such, applicants believe that claim 12, as amended, is patentable both over JA '483 used in combination with either Nagashima or Borromeo. In addition, claim 13 is dependent from claim 12, and as such, is believed by applicants to also be patentable over JA '483 used in combination with either Nagashima or Borromeo.

Claim 14, as now amended, includes securing the second riser cap to the second riser tube of the motorcycle "after securing the second riser tube to the motorcycle". Applicants submit that in citing the JA '483 reference in Examiner's 103(a) rejections, that there is no *reasonable expectation of success* for securing such second riser cap to the second riser tube of the motorcycle *after* securing the second riser tube to the motorcycle. Applicant submits that one skilled in the art would be unlikely to expect success in solving the problem by combining the JA '483 reference and either of the Nagashima or Borromeo references because of the limited space between the upper triple clamp 14 and the riser tube 17 of the handle bar clamp 19 provided in JA '483 (shown in Figures 3 and 4). As such, applicants contend that that claim 14, as amended, is patentable both over JA '483 used in combination with either Nagashima or Borromeo based on the lack of reasonable expectation of success with respect to the JA '483 reference. In addition, claim 15 is dependent from claim 14, and as such, is believed by applicants to also be patentable over JA '483 used in combination with either Nagashima or Borromeo.

Claim 16, as now amended, includes "each riser tube including a base end and an extension end, the extension end extending away from the base end of each riser tube, each riser tube providing a clearance area below each riser tube sufficient for removal of the fasteners without contacting the upper triple clamp, the fasteners of each riser tube being aligned along a vertical plane centered within each riser tube, the vertical plane running front to back through

each riser tube”. Applicants contend that the JA ‘483 reference teaches no such clearance area being provided below the riser tube. Also, one skilled in the art would be unlikely to combine the Nagashima reference with the JA ‘483 reference because alignment of the fasteners as described above would generally result in contact with the stem pipe 3. Further, one skilled in the art would be unlikely to combine the Borromeo reference with the JA ‘483 reference because of Borromeo’s teaching of using only a single screw 20 to hold the second ends 12, 13 together (Figure 2). As known, multiple fasteners are generally employed on a motorcycle in retaining a handlebar due to the high shear stress forces on the fasteners during routine turning of the handlebar. These high forces are attributed to the significant weight of the apparatuses (e.g., fork tubes, wheel, etc.) operatively coupled to the handlebar via the fasteners as well as the ground forces acting in opposition as the motorcycle is ridden at high speeds. In contrast, the corresponding forces in bicycle applications are much less due to lower weight of the apparatus and lower riding speeds, and as such, single fasteners may be sufficiently used. As such, applicants contend that that claim 16, as amended, is patentable both over JA ‘483 used in combination with either Nagashima or Borromeo references. In addition, claim 17 is dependent from claim 16, and as such, is believed by applicants to also be patentable over JA ‘483 used in combination with either Nagashima or Borromeo.

Applicants have also amended the specification to fully elaborate on the figures of the application. As mentioned in the now-amended specification (starting at page 7, line 18 of originally filed description), the fasteners 36, 38 of each riser tube 22 are aligned along a vertical plane 31 centered within the riser tube 22, in which the vertical plane 31 runs front to back through the riser tube 22. Applicants have amended Figure 3 to specifically reference vertical plane as 31. As further mentioned in the now-amended specification (starting at page 8, line 10 of the originally filed description), the riser tube 22 includes a base end 35 and an extension end 37. As such, the base end 35 extends in a first direction 39, which is rearward and generally upward. The first direction 39 is therefore at an angle 41 from vertical. The extension end 37 extends in a second direction 43 outward from the base end 35 of the riser tube 22. The second direction is rearward and generally horizontal as shown in Figure 4. As shown, a clearance area is provided below the riser tube 22 sufficient for removal of the first and second fasteners 36 and 38 without contacting the upper triple clamp (not shown). Applicants have amended Figure 4 to specifically reference base end 35, extension end 37, first direction 39, angle 41, and second

direction 43. Applicants believe that these amendments are fully supported by the drawings and application as a whole.

In light of the above, Applicants submit that the present rejections of claims 1-21 should be withdrawn. If the Examiner feels that prosecution of the present application can be materially advanced by a telephonic interview, the undersigned would welcome a call at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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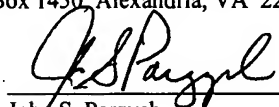
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Amendments to the Drawings

The attached drawing sheets include changes to Figures 3 and 4. The sheets replace the corresponding original sheets that respectively show Figure 3 and Figure 4. In the replacement sheet for Figure 3, element 31 has been added, indicating orientation of the fasteners 36 and 38 within the riser tubes 22. In the replacement sheet for Figure 4, elements 35, 37, 39, 41, and 43 have been added, indicating the shape of the riser tube 22.

Attachments: Replacement Sheet for Figure 3

Replacement Sheet for Figure 4